

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 ACDA-19 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02

TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01

SPM-01 DRC-01 /186 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5320

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

S E C R E T SAIGON 7189

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EGEN, PFOR, ID, VS

SUBJECT: QUARTERLY ASSESSMENT FOR INDONESIA

REF: JAKARTA 6571

1. IF JAKARTA'S QUARTERLY ASSESSMENT ACCURATELY REFLECTS SENIOR GOI OFFICIALS VIEW OF THE SITUATION IN VIET-N., THEN EMBASSY JAKARTA HAS BEFORE IT A RATHER SIZEABLE TASK OF CORRECTING MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE CURRENT REALITIES IN VIET-NAM SO DISTORTED AS TO ASSUME THE PROPORTIONS OF THE GROTESQUE. WE WOULD MUCH APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED OF THE IDENTITY OF THE INDONESIAN LEADERS WHO WOULD USE SUCH PHRASES AS "JOOMED REGIME" (REFERRING TO GVN) IN PARA 6 AND "SAIGON'S COLLAPSE" IN PARA 14D. SUCH COMMENTS BETRAY A PESSIMISM ABOUT THE FUTURE IN VIET-NAM TOTALLY AT VARIANCE WITH OUR ESTIMATE WHICH BASED ON REPORTS FROM ALL PARTS OF SVN AND ON THOROUGH-GOING INTELLIGENCE ANALYSES. GVN EXPERIENCE SINCE THE CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT SIGNED 15 MONTHS AGO DEMONSTRATES ITS MILITARY CAPACITY TO MEET AND DEFEAT NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES. SOUTH VIETNAMESE THEMSELVES HAVE INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN THE STRENGTH OF THEIR ARMS. NOTWITHSTANDING

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OCCASIONAL TACTICAL REVERSES NVA ATTACKS ARE TURNED BACK TIME

AFTER TIME AND NVA CASUALTIES MOUNT.

2. EVEN THOUGH, FROM THE FIRST ARRIVAL OF THE INDONESIAN ICCS CONTINGENT, WE HAVE NOTED THEIR GLOOMY OUTLOOK AND HAVE DONE OUR BEST IN BRIEFINGS AND CONVERSATIONS TO GIVE THEM CLEARER PICTURE OF SITUATION HERE, IN THEIR MOST DEPRESSED MOMENTS THEY HAVE NEVER SO FAR DEPARTED FROM REALITIES, IF WE ACCEPT PARAS 6 AND 14D OF REFTEL AS VALID, HAVE THEIR SUPERIORS IN JAKARTA, INDO-NESEAN ATTITUDE IN JAKARTA CONTRASTS STRANGELY WITH THAT OF POLES AND HUNGARIANS, BOTH OF WHOM GRANT PRIVATELY THAT IT IS INCREASINGLY EVIDENT NVA HAS NO CHANCE OF WINNING A MILITARY DECISION IN SVN.

3. WE ARE AWARE OF RELATIVE INDONESIAN INEXPERIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, THE SCARS LEFT FROM THEIR OWN TRAUMATIC CLOSE ESCAPE FROM AN INTERNAL COMMUNIST TAKEOVER WHICH LEAD THEM TO REGARD THE CHINESE SUPPORTED NORTH VIETNAMESE AS NINE FEET TALL, A TENDENCY FED BY REPORTING FROM HANOI EMBASSY. NEVERTHELESS, WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT THAT SENIOR INDONESIAN LEADERS REALLY EXPECT "SAIGON'S COLLAPSE". HOWEVER, IF THIS ASSESSMENT EVEN ONLY PARTLY ACCURATE, JUST HOW INDONESIA "WITH ITS ASEAN, THIRD WORLD, AND HANOI CONNECTIONS MIGHT PLAY USEFUL ROLE IN FURTHERING POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IN VIET-NAM" SOMEHOW SEEMS TO ELUDE US HERE ALTHOUGH EMBASSY JAKARTA IN THE NEXT SENTENCE SAYS "THEY MIGHT IF THEY WOULD".

4. WE WOULD MUCH APPRECIATE ELEBORATION OF WHAT EMBASSY JAKARTA CONCEIVES TO BE THE ROLE INDONESIA COULD PALY, THE NATURE OF THE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THAT MIGHT EMERGE, AND HOW U.S. INTERESTS WOULD BE SERVED THEREBY. WHILE WE HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS THAT THERE IS SUCH A USEFUL ROLE FOR INDONESIA JUST NOW, WE WOULD NOT WISH TO OVERLOOK ANY POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO ACCELERATE AMERICAN DISENGAGEMENT LEAVING SOUTH VIET-NAM ECONOMICALLY VIABLE, MILITARILY ABLE TO DEFEND ITSELF WITH ITS OWN MANPOWER, AND FREE TO CHOOSE ITS OWN GOVERNMENT AND LEADERS AS ITS OWN PEOPLE MAY THEMSELVES FREELY DETERMINE.

5. WE WOULD WELCOME JAKARTA'S SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW WE MIGHT ASSIST IN CONEYING TO GOI MORE REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIET-NAM PICTURE. WE WILL OURSELVES BE ON LOOKOUT FOR MATERIALS WHICH MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN THE EFFORT. IT OCCURS TO US IT WOULD BE VERY SECRET

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USEFUL FOR AS MANY JAKARTA EMBASSY OFFICIALS AS POSSIBLE TO VISIT VIET-NAM WHEN THIS MIGHT BE WORKED IN, SO THEY MAY FIND BY PERSONAL OBSERVATION WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REALITIES.
MARTIN

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